

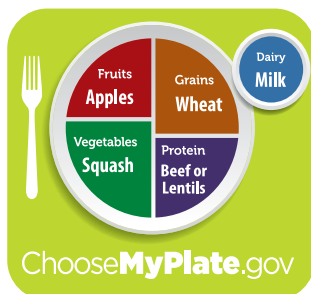
Celebrate **Farm to School Month** throughout **Montana!**

What is Farm to School Month?

October is National Farm to School Month, a time to celebrate the connections that are happening between schools and local food producers. In 2010, Congress officially designated October as National Farm to School Month, demonstrating the growing importance and role of Farm to School programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies and educate children about the origins of food.

Let's Celebrate, Montana!

National Farm to School Month is a great time to offer up meals featuring Montana-grown foods or take a field trip to visit a nearby farm! There are many great ways to celebrate Farm to School Month whether you are a student, teacher, parent, food service director, farmer, or community member. Consider the following ways to celebrate:



Showcase Montana foods on the lunch tray.

Consider serving up these Montana foods from each section of MyPlate: apples (fruit), squash (vegetable), wheat (grain), beef or lentils (protein) and milk (dairy).

Embark on food and agricultural explorations!

Go on a farm field trip or bring a food producer or chef into the classroom to talk about what they do. There are many other fun in-class activities that connect perfectly with Montana and common core standards.

Connect with your community. Consider hosting a harvest dinner at the school cafeteria or other community location to celebrate delicious food, healthy communities, and Montana's agricultural bounty.

The Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, Farm to Cafeteria Network, Montana FoodCorps, Eat Right Montana and other statewide partners have created this guide to help schools across Montana participate in Farm to School Month in their cafeterias, classrooms, and communities! So let's celebrate!



Tools and Inspiration

The National Farm to School Network developed a number of materials to help communities, schools and other organizations promote Farm to School Month and raise awareness about the value of connecting students with local food. The following resources will provide inspiration and resources to get started:

Farm to School Month Web page

www.farmtoschoolmonth.org

Farm to School Month Fact Sheet

<http://www.farmtoschoolmonth.org/farmto/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Fact-sheet-20131.pdf>

2013 Theme of the Day Calendar

<http://www.farmtoschoolmonth.org/theme-of-the-day-calendar-2013/>

Montana Farm to School Month Webinar (October 2012)

<http://bit.ly/14PPsnn>

Celebrate National Farm to School Month this October Webinar (September 2013)

<http://www.farmtoschool.org/webinars.php>

Serve up a Slice of Montana

There are many ways to locate local farmers, ranchers and food businesses; here are a few strategies to get started:

Go to your local Farmers Market and start talking with area farmers. Find out who is interested in working with your school/district to provide food. For a list of Montana Farmers Markets', go to: <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/FarmersMarkets/>

View the Montana Department of Commerce Made in Montana Directory at:

<http://www.madeinmontanausa.com/ProDir.asp>

View the Abundant Montana Directory (compiled by AERO – Alternative Energy Resources Organization) at: <http://www.aeromt.org/abundant/>

View the Farm to Cafeteria Producers Database (compiled by Farm to Cafeteria Network):

<http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/FarmersMarkets/>

Pose a question to other Montana food service managers on the Montana Lunchline listserv. This group has a wealth of information on sourcing local products. For more information or to be added to this list, contact Katie Bark for more information at (406) 994-5641 or kbark@mt.gov.

Connect with a nearby Montana FoodCorps service member. Although these dedicated service members serve at a specific site, they are happy to share their knowledge of local food producers. Look on the map for the nearest one or read their lively accounts at: www.montanafoodcorps.org

Check with your distributor (SYSCO or FSA) for a list of Montana products that they stock on a regular basis.

For more helpful **procurement information**, including **food safety information** and regulations:

Buying Local Food Guide, Montana Team Nutrition Program

<http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFood/FarmToSchool/GuidePurchasingLocalFoods.docx>

Farm to Cafeteria Manual for Montana

<http://farmtocafeteria.ncat.org/>

Contact Your County or Tribal Sanitarian

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/phep/countytribalhealthdepts.shtml>

Dig into your bank of recipes and ideas for inspiration for ways to incorporate local foods into your meals for October (and beyond). We have recommended a few school-friendly recipes to get your gears turning, download the following recipes at www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School.

Apples

Apple Cake
Apple Crisp
Baked Sweet
Potatoes & Apples

Beef

Sloppy Joes
Taco Soup

Lentils

Lentil & Beef Tacos
Lentil Southwest
Salad

Squash

Beefaroni
Butternut Rice Pilaf
Fall Fiesta Lasagna
Marinara Sauce with
Squash

Showcase Your Efforts

Make sure to showcase the efforts in the cafeteria and classroom by making announcements, hanging signs, or putting labels on local foods. Hang eye-catching posters in visible locations throughout the school listing what's local on the menu:

Montana Team Nutrition Program developed the Montana Menu Board, a reusable menu board designed, to showcase Montana foods served in cafeterias. Download at:

<http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFood/FarmToSchool/MTMenuBoards.pdf>

Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center developed twelve Montana Farm to School posters, each with fun facts, nutritional information, and vibrant graphics. Collect them all: http://www.lakecountycdc.org/For_the_Cafeteria

Connect to the Classroom

Food is a fantastic topic by which to teach many subjects from art to math! Extend the exploration this October by pairing what's on the lunch line to learning in the classroom.

Embark on a farm field trip. Kids are more likely to try new foods if they have been exposed to them and have been part of the growing process. Serving apples? Kids can learn about what it takes to be an orchardist! Consider timing field trips directly before that farmer's food is being served in the cafeteria. Invite the food producer to come eat lunch with the kids or hand out samples in advance. Teachers can cover many subjects through farm field trips or farmer visits to the classrooms. The Hayride is a great guide for planning successful farm field trips: <http://growing-minds.org/documents/the-hayride-a-resource-for-educational-farm-field-trips.pdf>

Teach about Montana agriculture. Montana Agriculture in the Classroom provides excellent lesson plans paired with Montana Standards and divided by grade level. All activities are available online at: <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/AgClassroom/>.

Have fun with food. Gallatin Valley Farm to School has compiled activity, book, video, and other recommendations for classroom learning during Farm to School Month. Download current and past Farm to School Month Teacher Toolkits at: <http://gvfarmtoschool.org/farm-to-school-month-2013/>

Explore the school kitchen. Students in the school kitchen? Absolutely! Students can learn about the school food service, tour the facility, and talk with the staff. This provides an opportunity for them to think about what they might prepare if they were the school food service manager. Look at the numbers -- have students (dependent on age) calculate the percentage of how many meals are eaten out of the total meals prepared. What about waste? Consider weighing the trash for a few days to see how much food is wasted. Can the students challenge their peers to waste less? How many pounds of beef is needed to make enough chili for the whole school? Family and Consumer Science and Prostart classes are perfectly matched to come up with some suggested recipes for future meals. Consider creating a cook-off competition between student teams. Winning team(s) could have their dish served at school! Just make sure to include some parameters for the USDA Meal Requirements and budget.

Share Your Celebration

How are YOU celebrating Farm to School Month this October? We want to know! Send photos, stories, and information to contact information below or through the form available at www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School. If sending photos or video, please attach a signed release form for each individual (child and adult) shown. The Office of Public Instruction release form can be found at the end of this guide.

For More Information

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Learn more about Farm to School in Montana at www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School

Resources and ideas about National Farm to School Month: www.farmtoschoolmonth.org



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Approved by State Superintendent Denise Juneau May 1, 2012